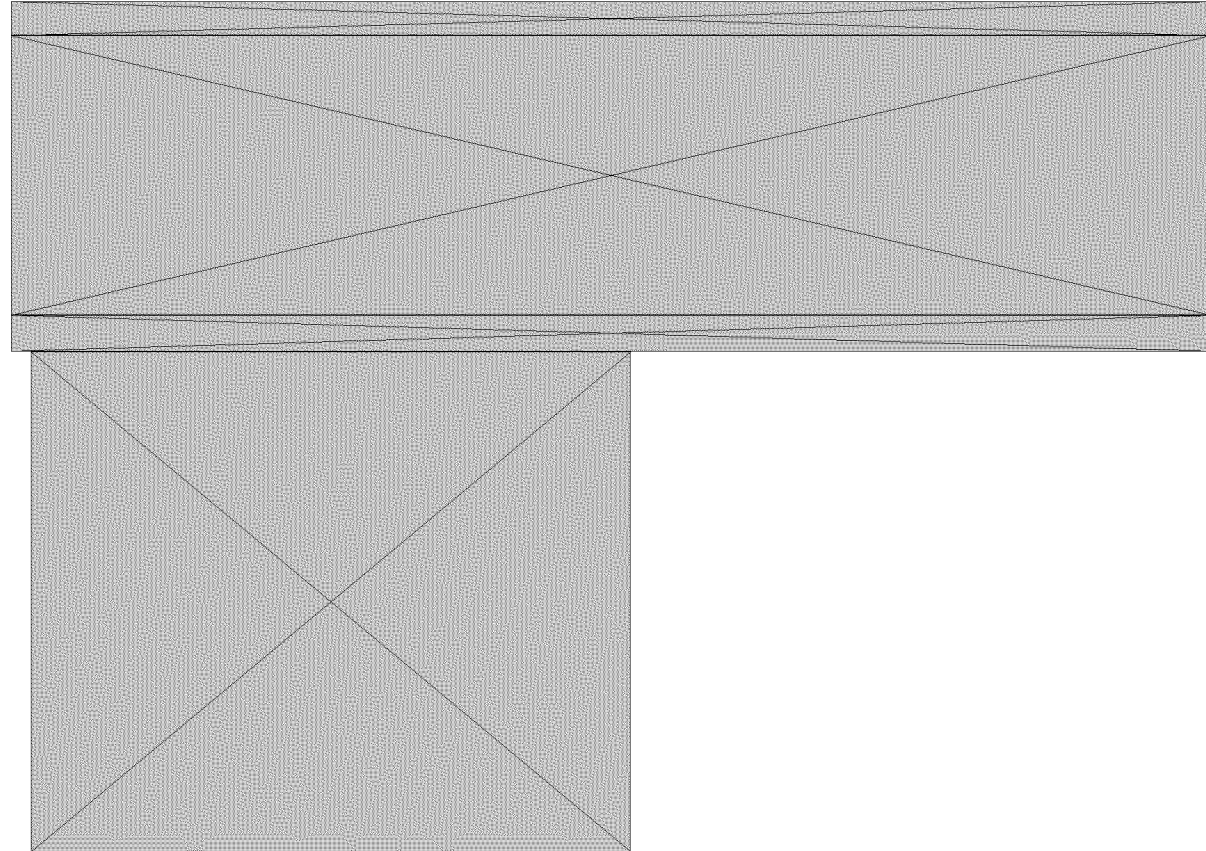


**To:** Webster, Susan[webster.susan@epa.gov]  
**From:** EnergyGuardian  
**Sent:** Thur 8/20/2015 4:50:09 PM  
**Subject:** Feeling the heat: Earth in July was hottest month on record

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Energy and environment headlines for the morning of Thursday, August 20, 2015



## **Feeling the heat: Earth in July was hottest month on record**

**By Seth Borenstein**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal officials say July was Earth's hottest month on record, smashing old marks.

July's average temperature was 61.86 degrees Fahrenheit, beating the previous global mark set in 1998 and 2010 by about one-seventh of a degree. That's a large margin for weather records.

Records go back to 1880, but nine of the 10 hottest months on record have happened since 2005.

The first seven months of 2015 are the hottest January-to-July span on record.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration climate scientist Jake Crouch says it is quite likely that 2015 will end up the hottest year on record, beating last year.

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## **EU urges G20 countries to make climate goals public**

**By The Associated Press**

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union is urging major emerging industrialized powers to make public their emissions targets ahead of a key climate conference in December.

Top EU climate official Miguel Arias Canete called Thursday on Argentina, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Turkey to submit goals to the United Nations.

He said it is important "to assess the level of ambition globally and to see whether we are on target" to keep the average global temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees F) compared with pre-industrial times.

Canete said only about a quarter of the 194 nations involved have weighed in with their climate commitments.

Expressing concern about what he termed the "painfully slow progress" in the negotiating rooms, Canete also warned that technical talks on an agreement must be sped up, as only 10 negotiating days remain until the conference in Paris.

## **Report on Iran side deal angers GOP, House Dems claims votes**

**By Erica Werner and George Jahn**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican opposition to President Barack Obama's nuclear deal is flaring over revelations of a secret side agreement involving Iranian inspections. But House Democrats are shrugging off the report and claiming they have the votes to back up Obama.

The Associated Press reported Wednesday on a previously undisclosed side deal between Iran and the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency that would allow Tehran to use its own inspectors to investigate a site it has been accused of using to develop nuclear arms.

The revelation, based on a document seen by the AP, newly riled Republican lawmakers who have been severely critical of the broader agreement to limit Iran's future nuclear programs, signed by the Obama administration, Iran and five world powers in July. The critics have complained that the wider deal is unwisely built on trust of the Iranians, while the administration has insisted it depends on reliable inspections.

"President Obama boasts his deal includes 'unprecedented verification.' He claims it's not built on trust," said House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio. "But the administration's briefings on these side deals have been totally insufficient — and it still isn't clear whether anyone at the White House has seen the final documents."

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## **California land quickly sinking in drought costs farmers**

**By Scott Smith**

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) — Land in Central California's agricultural region is sinking so quickly because of the state's historic drought that it is forcing farmers to spend millions of dollars upgrading irrigation canals and putting roads, bridges and other infrastructure at risk.

The Central California Irrigation District recently spent \$4.5 million to raise the walls of a canal, and the district's manager, Christopher White, says they're about to invest another \$2.5 million to replace a bridge that's now below the canal's water line.

"It's a vivid picture of what subsidence can do," said White, who serves 1,900 farmers on the San Joaquin Valley's west side that grow crops such as tomatoes, cotton, fruit and almonds in three counties.

Sinking land has occurred for decades in California because of excessive groundwater pumping during dry years, but NASA data released Wednesday by the state's Department of Water Resources shows the pace has dramatically quickened as the state endures its fourth year of drought.

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## **Minority of US Catholics know pope's climate views: AP poll**

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**By Rachel Zoll and Emily Swanson**

NEW YORK (AP) — A new survey has found fewer than half of U.S. Roman Catholics said they knew of Pope Francis' bombshell encyclical on curbing climate change — and only a fraction of those heard about it from the pulpit — in the month after he released the document with an unprecedented call for the church to take up his message.

Forty percent of American Catholics and 31 percent of all adults said they were aware of the encyclical, according to the poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and Yale University. Among Catholics who knew about the document, just 23 percent said they heard about it at Mass.

The survey, conducted July 17-19, provides an early measure of the impact of the encyclical in the U.S., where Francis is expected to press his teaching on the environment in his first visit to the country next month.

The U.S. is home to some of the staunchest objectors to mainstream science on climate change and to government intervention aimed at easing global warming, along with a segment of Catholics who think the pope should be talking far more about marriage and abortion than the environment.

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## **Plaintiffs seek \$750 million in Fort Detrick pollution suit**

**By The Associated Press**

BALTIMORE (AP) — A \$750 million wrongful death lawsuit filed against Fort Detrick charges that the Army's handling of chemical and biological toxins was reckless and responsible for a number of deaths and illnesses.

Post officials didn't return telephone calls about the lawsuit, filed Wednesday in U.S. District Court in Baltimore.

The plaintiffs include family members of Kristen Renee Hernandez, who died from brain cancer in 2008. The lawsuit also seeks compensation for other deaths or illnesses it says were caused by living near Fort Detrick.

The lawsuit cites groundwater contamination from chemicals buried decades ago. It also mentions Cold War-era anthrax research and Agent Orange experiments during the Vietnam War.

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## **A message from the American Petroleum Institute**

**America is now the world's #1 natural gas producer and will soon be #1 in oil. Now more than ever, abundant energy means abundant prosperity, opportunity and security for all Americans.**

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## **California board moves up meeting to review green jobs measure**

**By Julia Horowitz**

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — A citizens board tasked with overseeing projects funded by a California ballot measure intended to generate clean-energy jobs will move up its first meeting to early September, Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de Leon said Wednesday.

The Los Angeles Democrat's announcement came after The Associated Press reported Monday that the board has never met and had not planned to meet until October or November.

Voters approved Proposition 39 in 2012 to raise taxes on corporations and send billions of dollars to schools for energy efficiency projects.

School districts are applying for funding, but so far the measure has generated barely one-tenth of the promised jobs, and the state has no comprehensive list of work done or energy saved.

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## **Audi to unveil rival to Tesla X at Frankfurt Auto Show**

**By The Associated Press**

BERLIN (AP) — Audi is planning to unveil an electric sport SUV concept with a range of over 310 miles (500 kilometers) — well beyond the range of rival carmaker Tesla's Model S and soon-to-launch Model X, the German automaker said Wednesday.

According to a statement, Audi's as-yet unnamed electric SUV will begin production in 2018. It will unveil the vehicle at the upcoming Frankfurt Auto Show, which opens to the press Sept. 15.

Tesla's highly anticipated new Model X SUV, the company's third vehicle, will begin shipping in a few weeks.

Audi, based in Ingolstadt, Germany, says its electric SUV will feature three electric motors powered by a large lithium-ion battery and will be its first large-series electric car.

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## Dog Days publishing schedule for EnergyGuardian

By EnergyGuardian

The Dog Days of summer are upon us, and as is tradition during the weeks leading up to Labor Day, EnergyGuardian will publish a single midday edition each day from Aug. 17 through Aug. 28.

Of course, we'll cover any breaking news with alerts.

Although Labor Day is not until Sept. 7, we expect to resume a normal publishing schedule on Monday, Aug. 31. There will be no newsletter on Labor Day, Sept. 7.

We hope you have a chance to get away and enjoy some relaxation as summer winds down and thank you for your support all year long.

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## China blast site owner on state firm's board

By Erica Kinetz

SHANGHAI (AP) — The man unveiled as principal owner of the warehouses at the center of deadly blasts in Tianjin also is on the board of a state-owned company that is ultimately controlled by the same powerful entity investigating the explosions, an Associated Press review of public documents found.

Corporate filings show that Yu Xuewei, the silent majority shareholder of Ruihai International Logistics, sits on the board of directors of a subsidiary of China Sinochem, one of the country's most influential conglomerates. Like other large state companies, Sinochem is controlled by the State Council, the central authority overseeing the investigation into last week's explosions at Ruihai's chemical warehouses that killed at least 114 people and displaced thousands.

Yu's connections hint at the extent of his political network and showcase the complexity of China's political system, in which the entity running an investigation can be linked to the company it is investigating. Major state-owned Chinese companies often are accused of ignoring safety and other regulations, especially Cabinet-level enterprises whose chief executives have a higher status in the ruling Communist Party hierarchy than the regulators who are supposed to oversee them.

The subsidiary where Yu serves as a director, Tianjin Port Sinochem Dangerous Goods Logistics Co., also has been accused of violating safety standards at its own hazmat warehouses. The environmental group Greenpeace released an investigation this week saying Tianjin Port Sinochem and its sister company, Sinochem Tianjin Binhai Logistic Corp., operated hazardous chemical warehouses less than 1,000 meters (3,280 feet) from a major highway, schools and residences, in violation of Chinese safety laws.

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## **Tianjin's deadly blasts expose China's work safety woes**

**By Didi Tang**

BEIJING (AP) — By official data, China is becoming safer from accidents year after year. But the explosions over the Tianjin port last week are a stark reminder that it has far to go in preventing workplace disasters — from blasts on factory floors to leaks of oil pipes and warehouse fires.

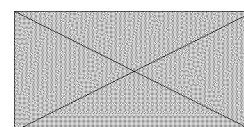
The blasts that started at a hazardous material warehouse in the eastern city of Tianjin and killed at least 114 people in one of China's worst industrial accidents in years came despite countless pledges by authorities to strictly enforce workplace safety regulations. There have been numerous campaigns — always one after each fatal accident — to eliminate safety risks, and local officials are routinely fired over fatal workplace incidents.

But a deep-rooted business mentality that puts profits ahead of safety seems hard to break in Beijing's fight against workplace accidents. The latest revelations on Ruihai International Logistics, the operator of the hazmat warehouse, suggest that a common Chinese business model — which heavily taps into connections with people in government — means safety rules can be easily bent for the convenience of the company.

"Companies are taking chances to skimp on safety measures, and regulating agencies are unable to enforce rules," said Zhong Shengjun, associate professor on industrial explosion and prevention at Northeastern University in Shenyang. "This is consistent with China's corporate culture, which is most interested in cutting costs and maximizing profits without adequate heed for safety."

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## **Week in Review – Ozone next on Obama's regulatory agenda**

Renewable Fuel Standard science questioned.

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### **EPA denies mine spill triggered on purpose: Utah AG**

Faced with a conspiracy theory posed by some lawmakers and local officials—that the Environmental Protection Agency unleashed a wastewater spill from the Gold King Mine on purpose—Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes said he received a categorical denial from EPA representatives when he pressed them on such suspicions while visiting the site Wednesday, the Deseret News reports.

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### **SEC should probe drillers' risk disclosure: Senators**

Twelve senators—led by Sen. Ben Cardin, D-Md.—have sent a letter to the Securities and Exchange Commission asking for an investigation into whether oil and gas drillers are being up front about the risks incurred by offshore drilling, FuelFix reports.

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### **Sage grouse to get \$2M DOD boost in Nevada**

A \$2 million grant from the Defense Department will help pay to restore the habitat of the threatened sage grouse in Nevada, in the thousands of miles overflowed by U.S. Navy air crews that are training, The Associated Press reports.

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### **Oil still pressured by supply increase, WTI near \$40**

After falling to an intraday low of \$40.21 a barrel on the pressure of increasing supplies in North America and the Middle East, U.S. benchmark crude for September delivery was up 30 cents to \$41.10 a barrel at midday Thursday as the contract was expiring on the Nymex, while in London, October Brent fell 7 cents to \$47.09, Reuters reports.

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### **Oil sands crude not profitable at current prices: Report**

A new analysis says producers of Canadian oil sands crude are losing money on every barrel they produce because prices are so low, The Wall Street Journal reports.

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## **Justice objects to Energy Future restructuring on environmental grounds**

Energy Future Holdings is trying to use the bankruptcy process to sidestep its environmental liabilities, according to objections Justice Department lawyers filed in court, The Dallas Morning News reports.

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## **New water treatment plant to reduce injection well use in Marcellus**

French company Veolia Water Technologies will partner Antero Resources in building a \$275 million wastewater treatment facility in West Virginia, to process shale brine rather than injecting it into wells, WBOY television reports.

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## **Americans driving further, according to highway data**

U.S. drivers covered 275.1 billion miles on the roads in June, an increase of 3.9 percent over the same month in 2014, pushing gasoline use higher, Reuters reports.

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## **Asian trio out front in supplying electric car batteries**

Auto makers are increasingly turning to LG Chem Ltd., Samsung SDI Co. and Panasonic Corp. to make the batteries that power their electric vehicles, The Wall Street Journal reports.

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## **Chinese emissions may be less than thought**

A study—published in the journal Nature—says scientists may have been overestimating China's contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions by more than 10 percent, The New York Times reports.

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